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ABSTRACT

At a very young age, a black child acquires a conceptualization or idea of race and the implications that such a conceptualization has for his "survival" and not quality of existence. While contemporary movements are geared toward offsetting some of the consequences, e.g., black self-determination, black power, and black control, blacks, in general, are still faced with the dilemma of identity (personality) development within a society dominated by the institutionalized norms and values of the "intellectual colonizer." Current educational systems, in order to be relevant, must be geared toward: (1) a consciousness which demonstrates concern for quality versus quantity; (2) a consciousness which places emphasis on human outcomes versus inputs; and, (3) a consciousness which deemphasizes product outputs. In addition, Black Studies can be instituted to meet the specific needs of a black society. Educational outcomes for the future should be geared toward facilitation of individual capacity for decision-making in the presence of substantive options. (Author/SB)

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HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE BLACK AMERICAN: AN OVERVIEW

by

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INTRODUCTION

"To be conceived black means that you are at risk while still inside the womb meant to shelter you. Racism takes its toll early, through class-related malnutrition and poor prenatal care. Black fetuses are aborted or born dead more often than white ones. More are thrust forth prematurely, at higher risk of damage to the delicate mechanisms of the brain. Once born, malnutrition, infection and inadequate health care exact their price in stunting of ultimate stature and in maldevelopment of the central nervous system. Before you know you are black, you will have experienced what it is to be black. But you learn the meaning of blackness soon enough in the crowded slum when you try to grow. You are two and a half times more likely to live in dilapidated housing units and three times more likely to be grossly overcrowded than whites who pay the same rent. Since your parents have less know-how in preparing you for school, your development quotient, which at a year (if you were lucky enough to be born at full birth weight) was indistinguishable from that of your white brother, will have fallen well behind by the time you are three, and still farther behind when you start bravely off to school at five."[1]

How does a black child acquire a conceptualization or idea of race and the implications that such a conceptualization has for his "survival", not quality of existence. The preceding, rather long quote, is exemplary of the fact that there are no simple or definitive answers. What we are confronted with is a diverse, rather complex system which has imposed a double burden on black Americans through severe social and economic inequalities which have a pronounced effect, even during fetal developmental stages, with

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1 Selig Greenberg, The Quality of Mercy (New York: Atheneum, 1971), pp. 105-106.

attendant psychological consequences suffered due to the development of low self-esteem, feelings of helplessness, powerlessness, and basic identity conflict. For example, it is estimated that thousands of babies are born each year with physiological impairments due to maternal improper diet. It is now clear that the impact of diet and disease on a child's health, mental capacities, and sense of values can vitiate motivation to learn.[1]

While contemporary movements are geared toward offsetting some of these consequences, e.g., black self-determination, black power, black control, current efforts may be making it even more difficult for "optimum" development of the black child because of the myriad alternatives and choices which "exist" today, vis-à-vis positive personality development and a reality analysis of contemporary American society. Blacks, in general, are still faced with the dilemma of identity (personality) development within a society dominated by the institutionalized norms and values of the "intellectual colonizer" - consciously, unconsciously, subtly, viciously. The maladaptive price which black children pay - death at an early age - is the maintenance and perpetuation of existing patterns of inequality. How does a child, born into a maladaptive environment with regard to its own unique biological and psychosocial needs, which on a cultural basis are more often than

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1 Irving S. Bengelsdorf, "Atoms and Men: Evidence Links Diet to Mental Retardation," Los Angeles Times, December 12, 1968, part 2, p. 8.

not contradictory and subservient to the macro-scene, develop a positive sense of self or of the society within which he must function. I, for one, do not know that this is an issue which can be successfully resolved within our current system, and especially after 16-18 years of conditioning. Yet I do indeed recognize that we, within educational institutions, and at the very disadvantageous level of higher education, must assist in the challenge before us. How best to meet this challenge within colleges and universities is what I will try to address my comments to in the ensuing material.

EDUCATION IN AMERICA: A MINORITY PERSPECTIVE

As a basic social institution, education has played a fundamental role in the growth and development of American culture and society. Traditionally, Americans - white Americans - have regarded education as a means for self and societal improvement. Yet, if the facts are reviewed, one becomes aware of the systematic deletion of the black American from equal access to the full range of benefits derived from this foundational agency. As cogently stated by Grier and Cobbs, "education has never offered a significant solution to the black man's dilemma in America."[1] The functions of American education have never been interpreted

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1 William A. Grier and Price M. Cobbs, Black Rage (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1968), p. 113

with respect to the social, economic, psychological, and cultural needs of the black American. Current programs, issues and concerns at the local, state, and national levels are reflective of the ineffectual relationship which has existed between the black American and American education establishments.

American education presumes color-blindness and, therefore, the invisibility of black people. The dynamics of the situation requires that whites give up their prejudicial attitudes and that blacks give up their identity. Once complete self-denial and self-abasement are accomplished, it is assumed that tranquility and equality will exist. Unfortunately, the obtained "equality" concedes to basic racist assumptions. An objective analysis of American education is supportive of the fact that the ". . .function of education in both black and white communities has been largely to establish the legitimacy of the values, ideals, and interests of the dominant majority. This has meant the denigration of all other values, ideals and interests, including those of the dependent black minority."[1] Social orders are produced and created by human activity, and this is done by systems of behavior typifications which are institutionalized. If it is plausible that institutions shape human social behavior, then the make-up of the

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1 Tilden J. LeMelle and Wilbert J. LeMelle, The Black College: A Strategy for Achieving Relevancy (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1969), p. 62.

role of incumbents is irrelevant, if the institution supports the dominance of one group over another. Such has been the pattern which education has legitimized through language and dialectic in the United States. Consequently, I would imagine that it is redundant to state that education has been and continues to be dysfunctional with regard to the needs, interests, and aspirations of black people.

Black people have a need for psychological equality and ". . . only black people can convey the revolutionary idea that black people are able to do things themselves."[1] With psychological freedom - freedom to be black in the ultimate, rational sense of the word - the masses of black people could make an assertive move toward making or participating in the making of the decisions which govern their destinies, and thus initiate a basic change in their lives. An education which is geared toward such a development is the type of education black people need. It is now necessary for education to meet the needs of black Americans in the manner in which it has functioned in meeting the needs of white Americans and their institutions.

The current status of higher education in the United States is an open indictment of the need for change. "All American higher education is now being attacked by disillusioned students

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1 Stokely Carmichael, "Power and Racism," Justice Denied, eds. William M. Chace and Peter Collier (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1970), p. 508.

and faculty because today's typical college education lacks relevance to today's realities."[1] Inevitably, black colleges face the most difficult task of any educational institutions in America, especially since they still "educate" the majority of black students pursuing a higher education. The difficulty of their task becomes more understandable when one considers the fact that their job ". . . involves both the restoration of the damaged black personality and the education of the individual to cope with the realities of black survival in American society."[2] Is such an education possible in white colleges and universities? The very emergence of Black Studies, and other programs which emphasize economic, cultural, and educational "disadvantages," is, in a sense, recognition of the failure of such institutions to interact positively with black students.

The black American has been caught up in an educational cycle of despair, a cycle which has been and continues to be a detriment to his ability to enter the mainstream of functional activity in our highly technological society. Significantly, efforts to improve the nature and quality of education received by black children must begin at the earliest possible age and continue throughout their educational experience. The preceding does,

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1 Tilden J. LeMelle and Wilbert J. LeMelle, The Black College: A Strategy for Achieving Relevancy (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1969), p. 2.

2 Ibid.

however, presuppose a change in conditions which have excluded the vast reservoir of black manpower from the opportunities afforded by the ever-increasing economic growth of America. Evidence is available which indicates that raising the educational level of black Americans, singly, will not result in increased equality.[1] Educated blacks still earn, almost uniformly, only 75% of the income that whites with comparable backgrounds earn.[2] Because of many undemocratic practices, the equalization of opportunities for the black man must be accompanied by action which will enhance access to and use of such opportunities. Hence, we must also begin to educate toward those aspects of human freedom, both tangible and intangible, so inherent in a conceptual and operational democracy. Within this context, again, there is the implication - indeed the necessity - for a qualitative and quantitative change in American education on every level up to and including graduate school.

It should be noted, however, that black institutions of higher education have done a commendable job of attempting to meet the educational needs of black people - given the historical perspective of power dispensation. Education of the black man

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1 James A. Geschwender, "Negro Education: The False Faith," Phylon, XXXIX, No. 4 (Winter, 1968), pp. 371-379.

2 U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Trends in Social and Economic Conditions in Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Areas," Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 33 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1970), p. 65.

in institutions of higher education in America has always assumed, from the very beginning, the major characteristics of the pervasive American dream. It has been thoroughly "white" and totally illusory. There is no record that indicates concern for a special history and aesthetic, nor for the absence of consideration of cultural disparity which blacks brought to the European-oriented curriculum when Oberlin first opened its doors to blacks in the early 19th century - and certainly not before then when Princeton enrolled two "African-born" seamen in 1774. The church-endowed colleges for blacks in the South and in bordering states all had the same European curriculum found in white colleges; but there was, in addition, a strong missionary zeal for "civilizing the African," i.e., making him European. A real indication of the mentality dealing with education of American blacks is seen in the origin of Lincoln University in Pennsylvania as an institution to train blacks as missionaries, to minister to other blacks in the Caribbean and Latin America. Opportunity for relevance to the black experience was further neglected in the land grant colleges created for black people - as an afterthought - by the Second Morrill Act of 1890. To deviate from the state approved curricula in these colleges in most of the old confederate states would have meant a swift end to the experiment of allowing blacks to exercise "responsibility" for their own education with state and Federal funds.

The preceding is merely a prelude to a complex set of variables which have influenced the development of black institutions of higher education. Because black institutions have been, and in many respects continue to be, mirror images of the "better" established white institutions, they have never functionally addressed themselves to the task of educating black people in tune with black values. Such institutions have been complicit in the educational tragedy of black people - they have produced large numbers of black graduates who are functionally incapable of addressing themselves to the needs and aspirations of black people. Quite obviously, "black" colleges and universities will remain a major force in the education of black Americans for many more years. It is equally obvious that change is necessary. One hardly need argue that black colleges and universities must begin to establish educational activities which will provide black students with a level of human functioning which is not humanly detrimental and psychologically damaging. Such institutions must now develop in black students the skills necessary for the maintenance of their physical existence as well as the ideological foundations upon which psychosocial needs can be met.

In the latter 60's, some black college presidents apparently acknowledged that they had a common problem and that it was incumbent upon them to seek out ideological positions beneficial to

black people.[1] In short, they ostensibly have accepted the challenge to educate toward the external realities of the black man's position in American society, such that their institutions may provide an education which is prescriptive and participant oriented vis-à-vis the black man's struggle for constructive change.

Today, the black colleges and universities are being placed in a somewhat different and more difficult position. Their very existence is being threatened on many levels and, paradoxically, they are being forced to fight to maintain their identity as <u>black</u> institutions. Black colleges ". . .are now experiencing institutional discontinuity under the force of a new black awareness" that rejects the American assimilation ideal.[2] Institutional discontinuity being described as the aiming of functions in one direction while they are more realistically required in another direction.[3] This new sense of urgency is challenging black colleges and universities to be more responsive, in a creative-educational manner, to the historical and contemporary needs of their constituencies. Many are now struggling to survive and at the same time make a concerted effort to expand their perspective, commitment, and investment in the education of black people.

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1 <u>The Chronicle of Higher Education</u>, IV, October 20, 1969, p. 6.

2 Henry A. Bullock, "The Black College and the New Black Awareness," <u>Daedalus</u>, 100, No. 3 (Summer, 1971), p. 574.

3 <u>Ibid.</u>

Inasmuch as it is exceedingly difficult to differentiate precisely among those aspects of higher education environments which have importance for student growth and development, the ensuing remarks will attempt to examine the education of black Americans not as something which assumes that its task is to change students to fit the "system," but rather one which would move education toward a positive attack on the questions of learning and developmental needs.

BLACK STUDENTS - PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INSTITUTIONS

It should be obvious that the black student comes to the university in a desperate attempt to live through the Du Boisian dilemma of double consciousness. He ". . .is torn between the need for a regular, formal education, part of the socialization process that we are told everyone needs in order to seek an acceptable role in society, and his need to carve out a new education experience, one that is meaningful to him as a black person."[1] His greatest concern is to scratch out a means of surviving in the "system." But, his greatest need is to acquire the vitalizing sense of his human dignity and destiny. Change in degree thus can become change in kind! An outgrowth of such change can be the acquisition of interpersonal and community satisfactions, as well as the achievement of self-transcendence and self-authentication within the context of community - the black community. We must begin to develop

1 The Chronicle of Higher Education, IV, October 20, 1969, pp. 4-5.

bicultural black students, students who have the capability of handling the barrier of American racism. Interestingly, ". . .any meaningful aspiration that black people hold, whether individual or collective, will be shaped by the black experience and can only be actualized in conflict with the larger WASP culture."[1] Within this context, the predominantly white college and university could represent a unique setting within which conflict could be meaningfully utilized to initiate the resolution of the desperate dilemma of the black student. If one can accept the premise that conflict and confusion can stimulate critical thinking, then the existential disequilibrium which exists for blacks at white colleges and universities could provide a medium through which we could begin to structure the ladder toward psychological liberation. Heider's "balance" concept reminds us that significant change often involves a period of disequilibrium, upset, and disintegration, out of which a new equilibrium is established.[2] Proshansky and Newton, for example, hypothesize that "... the psychiatrically healthy [black], is one who basically identifies with [blacks], but who is aware of and realistic about the problems facing him in a 'white man's' society."[3]

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1 Henry A. Bullock, "The Black College and the New Black Awareness," Daedalus, 100, No. 3 (Summer, 1971), p. 596, citing R. A. Schermerborn, Comparative Ethnic Relations.

2 F. Heider, The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations (New York John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1958).

3 Harold Proshansky and Peggy Newton, "The Nature and Meaning of Negro Self-Identity", in Social Class, Race, and Psychological Development, eds. Martin Deutsch, Irwin Katz, and Arthur R. Jensen (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968), p. 196.

Conversely, the argument has been made that contemporary black students struggling for self-determination ". . .will not accept training for 'black liberation' from the faculty and students of predominantly white institutions because [they do not] think they are fitted for the role, nor should white institutions try to play it in this epoch of black empowerment."[1] With the increase in the percentage of black students attending such institutions during the 1960's, the preceding statement is purely academic, we now have no choice but to attempt to develop meaningful alternatives at such institutions whereby 20th century Afro-desperation can be articulated in terms of resources, means and ends which will be functional for the development of black people.

How serious is the problem? The higher education picture for blacks is less than encouraging. In 1960, the percentage of blacks with college degrees almost equalled the white rate of 1940.[2] The 1969 data, however, give rise to a high degree of pessimism in that the percentage of blacks who had graduated from college had risen from only 5% to 7% since 1960; whereas the white rate had risen from 14% to 19%.[3] The lack of correlation between educational achievement and social and economic

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1 St. Clair Drake, "The Black University in the American Social Order," Daedalus, 100, No. 3 (Summer, 1971), p. 886.

2 Philip M. Hauser, "Demographic Factors in the Integration of the Negro," Daedalus, 94 (Fall, 1965), pp. 847-877.

3 U. S. Bureau of the Census, "Trends in Social and Economic Conditions in Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Areas," Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 33 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1970), p. 40.

mobility has already been documented; hence, the complexity of the problem becomes more intense vis-à-vis the educationally disfranchised, who still perceive education as a means of such vertical mobility. Just as important is the fact that enrollment figures for black Americans more than doubled during the decade 1960 to 1970, with the percentage of blacks in traditionally white colleges and universities increasing from less than 50% in 1964 to almost two-thirds of all black students in 1968.[1] Yet, the traditionally black colleges and universities graduated approximately 73% of the black students receiving Bachelor's, graduate and professional degrees in 1968.[2]

Because the psycho-social burdens at predominantly white institutions are, perhaps, far greater than the academic ones, with a resultant psychological crippling and high attrition rate among black students - students without access to other educational institutions on a par with their white counterparts - we are losing invaluable resources. If, as Kendrick infers from the Coleman Report, "not more than 15% and perhaps as few as 10% of . . . Negro high school seniors would score 400 or more

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1 U. S. Bureau of the Census, "The Social and Economic Status of Negroes in the United States, 1969" Current Population Reports, Series P-23, No. 29 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1970), p. 53.

2 Elias Blake, Jr., "Future Leadership Roles for Predominantly Black College and Universities in American Higher Education," Daedulus, 100, No. 3 (Summer, 1971), pp. 745-771, citing John Egerton, State Universities and Black Americans.

on the verbal section of the SAT" and "only 1 percent or 2 percent would be likely to score 500 or more,"[1] shouldn't predominantly white institutions, of necessity, have been concerned with developmental problems of black students? Unless, of course, the institutions were only being responsive to social and governmental pressures regarding access (head-count), and were not committed toward facilitating successful matriculation! It is probably safe to state that most administrators and black educators were aware of the long-term financial, educational, and political implications of their decisions regarding access for minority students at predominantly white institutions of higher education. History now dictates that they were not willing to make the commitment of "scarce resources" which would be necessary for black students to be able to acquire the competencies which higher education is supposed to develop.

Perhaps the gravity of the attrition problem can be more fully appreciated by a case example of a predominantly white university which has traditionally enrolled a large percentage of black students and which, at the time the data were compiled, did not have any type of program for the culturally different student on its main campus at Carbondale, Illinois. Southern Illinois

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1 S. A. Kendrick, "The Coming Segregation of our Selective Colleges," College Board Review, 66 (Winter, 67-68), p. 8.

University has probably the largest black student resident pupulation of any of the major institutions of higher learning in the country. While accurate figures were not available, it was estimated that about 10% of the student population at S. I. U. was black American. In round numbers, based on 1968 enrollment figures, we are talking about approximately 2,000 students. Supportive inferences regarding the severity of the attrition problem may be drawn from information provided by the Director of Institutional Research at S. I. U. The report pertained to the distribution by grade point average of black students (who indicated that they were black) on the Carbondale campus for the Fall Quarter, 1968.

The data may be summarized as follows:

1. Of those students who indicated that they were black, the following breakdown was provided regarding class status:

Freshman level	572
Sophomore level	229
Junior level	155
Senior level	106

   a. If the black freshman enrollment was relatively stable over four years, the data are indicative of a serious attrition rate:

60% F-So.; 32% So.-J; 32% J-S. Using the previously quoted figures, there is an attrition of 82.5% from the freshman to the senior level. According to Vivian W. Henderson, the loss at private black colleges between the freshman and senior year is about 60%.[1]

2. Of 246 freshmen who indicated that they were black, and for whom GPA's were available, 68.3% (168) had averages below 3.0. Percentages for the other levels are as follows:

Sophomore	41%
Junior	27.5%
Senior	7.6%

a. The percent of students across levels with a 3.0 GPA were:

F = 8.5% (n=21, N=246)

So. =15.4% (n=30, N=195)

Jr. = 19.7% (n=28, N=142)

Sr. = 14.3% (n=15, N=105)

N=no # for whom averages were available; n=no # with 3.0 GPA

If the above percentages are added to those for students under 3.0, the percent of students in a "marginal to in trouble" category increases to 76.8, 56.4, 47.2, and 21.9, respectively. (The situation is further compounded by areas with GPA requirements other than 3.0 for entry, graduation, and student teaching.)

As tenuous as they may be, these data indicate that even for those black students who gain admission through normal channels, there is a serious problem of success within the system.

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1 Vivian W. Henderson, "Negro Colleges Face the Future," Daedalus, 100, No. 3 (Summer, 1971), pp. 630-645.

The data are also indicative of a need to "enrich" the freshman-sophomore experience for black students (chances of graduating appear to increase substantially if a student can "survive" through the sophomore year, based on GPA data). Before any conclusive statements can be made about the preceding data, more definitive longitudinal studies must be undertaken. Within the preceding context, however, it is extremely significant to consider the implications of the following recommendation taken from a November 2, 1971, report of a special committee of the Illinois Board of Higher Education:

> "Advisers at all levels [should] increase their efforts toward career counseling so that individuals who would benefit more from community college entrance or work experience, rather than by entering senior institutions, be properly directed. Further, we recommend that higher admissions requirements be implemented at senior institutions."[1]

There will continue to be an intolerable problem of access and attrition among black students unless there is some type of critical, massive educational intervention. It would appear that remedial and compensatory efforts have failed, in general, to meet their goals. As stated by Crossland: "Perhaps it is impossible

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1 American Council on Education, Higher Education and National Affairs, XX, No. 40, (November 5, 1971), p. 7.

to repair sixteen years of disability in sixteen weeks. Data indicate that the effectiveness of remediation declines sharply as the age of the student increases."[1] Moreover, the human costs of current efforts at the higher education level are tremendous for the students who enter special programs with a high degree of motivation and expectation and still fail when they re-establish contact with the mainstream of activity.

Again, we are confronted with the dilemma of time and place - 16 to 18 years of age and entry into a more competitive and demanding level of education with a common general characteristic of being less well prepared for the competitive collegiate arena than the dominant majority. Where do we go from here? How do we, black educators, cope with the necessity of educational skills development within the new, antagonistic learning environment? How do we contend with the disadvantage of continued psychosocial development within a system which has historically defined black people as anti-values? There are several alternatives which are available to us as we address ourselves to this challenge.

First, we must seek to establish educational alternatives whereby we can reinforce the development of consciousness and concern for the black community among black students, making

1 Fred E. Crossland, Minority Access to Higher Education, (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), p. 104.

sure that our presence at white schools is always directed toward the best interest of black people. It is imperative that we begin to insist that educational quality be judged by the actual achievements of students in intellectual and interpersonal skills, knowledge, creativity, and action. Except for the estimated less than 1 percent of any population group who are incapable of normal learning, educational units - on all levels - must be required to bring all students up to some minimal level of functional capability. The success of black and other culturally different students in the current system will be based on our ability to provide an environment which brings together competent teachers, effective instructional technology, and materials which are relevant to the needs and interests of the students. Within this context, the educational environment must enhance motivation for success by augmenting the self-esteem and aspiration for achievement which emanate, in large part, from pride in one's inheritance. Hence, we must preserve and respect minority group values. A coping strategy in this sense involves ego-strengthening processes which are facilitated by the mastery of the socio-academic tasks of transition from high school to college. "Coping functions not only involve self-manipulation of feelings and attitudes in maintaining a sense of worth, but also active exploration and use of the interpersonal environment, leading

often to broadening the basis of one's self-esteem."[1] The importance of environment in shaping learning can no longer be ignored in the planning and administration of educational programs. Consequently, black educators must attempt to implement constructive, demanding, and challenging curriculum and instruction models in special sections and special courses, courses within which we may even control ethnic distribution, in an attempt to capitalize upon motivation regarding 'relevant' materials, if we are to facilitate the development of coping skills among black students. Black Studies, as a functional medium, offers considerable promise at this level.

Black Studies may not be a panacea, but Black Studies must mobilize its resources for a positive attack on such problems if we are to develop the necessary manpower to service the ever-expanding social, cultural, psychological, political, and economic needs of black people. The educational ideology, goals, and objectives of Black Studies must be illustrative, not only of emphasis on the revitalization of the black intellectual tradition, but also of a commitment to the eradication of weak egos, perceptions of incompetence, and educational skills problems in general. If such is not possible within predominantly

1 George V. Coelho, et al, "Coping Strategies in a New Learning Environment," The College Student and His Culture, ed. Kaoru Yamamoto (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968), p. 343.

white schools, then maybe Black Studies should not exist at such schools. Black students have enough contradictions to face within the system without having to cope with similar, and perhaps more comprehensive, contradictions within Black Studies.

Black Studies may be viewed as the cutting edge in the movement toward fulfillment of the purported purposes of American education. Black Studies is not isolationist. Black Studies has something to offer to the world community as it functions in relation to the movement toward cultural parallelism, a necessary step in the development of a humane world community. In this context, black educators and students must make sure that Black Studies encompasses exposure to the struggle of black people the world over. Surely we recognize the need for emphasis on the Afro-American, but we must also come to terms with the fact that science and technology have brought about the annihilation of distance - hence, a Pan-African focus is vital. It has been strongly suggested that black people in America will not be free until Africa is free - until black people the world over deal with and function in terms of total liberation. Such a perspective includes, for example, the large numbers of people of African descent in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Further, while Black Studies may be geared toward meeting the specific needs of a black society, those needs cannot be met if

we focus only on the black society. That society cannot be understood or helped in a vacuum. Indeed, today confrontation with racist realities is a major aspect of Black Culture. Divorced from this culture, Black Studies may lose its reason for being.

Based on the preceding, in part, it becomes imperative for black educators to conceptualize the real meaning and thrust of Black Studies. They must see it for what it could be at this point in time, a movement toward the type of education which will service the needs, goals, and aspirations of black people. Black people can no longer afford to be educated away from their origins. Henceforth, our education must speak to the needs of our community and our people. The law of living and being of the black man can be defined through Black Studies.

Inasmuch as it was black students who agitated for the development of Black Studies, it seems appropriate for black students to maintain the same level of seriousness toward the continued implementation of this movement toward black education. In our sustained struggle, Black Studies can be the medium through which we can conceptualize the relationship between instant and sustained success. Consequently, in delineating the objectives of Black Studies, there is a definite need for a research component. In this context, the research component

must focus, in large part, on the mechanics of the immediate realities of the everyday suppression of the black masses. Only students and teachers in a balanced learning situation can foster and perpetuate such a perspective. Realistically, Black Studies must be future oriented and, therefore, must provide the medium through which the strategies may be developed for defining and meeting the liberation, decolonization, and nationalization needs of black people.

Interestingly, self-study regarding educational effort was not, and in most instances is not, an aspect of Black Studies endeavors. This is due, in large part, to the urgency with which Black Studies was implemented and therefore did not allow for the development of:

1. A broad overall philosophic framework.

2. Overall organizational goals which would reflect points of achievement within the philosophic framework.

3. Delineated educational objectives which would be reflective of accepted points of achievement and operation in the continual effort at goals achievement.

Administrative responsibility in Black Studies, therefore, has never been a team effort vis-à-vis interpreting organizational philosophy, goals, and objectives in terms of educational policy. Was Black Studies then doomed to failure, initially, within American

educational establishments - as has been the case in many instances - not only due to a lack of resources, human and economic, but more importantly, because of the lack of organizational preplanning? Can we <u>now</u> recover and gear our efforts in the above prescribed manner? This is a question which is integral to the new challenge of and within Black Studies.

Obviously, we must attempt to radically restructure both curricular and extracurricular activities at predominantly white colleges and universities. Activities should be grounded in the experience of our struggle against Anglo-Western exploitation. In courses, workshops, rap sessions, and in living areas, we have to facilitate the remaking of the political consciousness of black students. They have to come to terms with the fact that education is neither value-free nor apolitical. Maybe, in this way, we can begin to make facts and information more meaningful in the development of a personal frame of reference. Maybe we can, in this way, aid in the development and maintenance of <u>black values</u>. Maybe, in this way, we can begin to counter the white man's definitions and the reality which acceptance of said definitions has traditionally offered us. There is a need for a new rationale, one which will create new dimensions in our thinking. We must develop a means of making black students consistently conscious of struggle and commitment and the need for viable alternatives to our current social predicament.

Secondly, where do we begin? What is the most advantageous level for those of us placed at the disadvantageous level of higher education to begin? Dressel and Lehmann have demonstrated that the most change in critical thinking ability occurs during the first two years of college, with the greatest change during the freshman year.[1] Correlatively, and just as importantly, Lehmann and Ikenberry have reported data which is indicative not only of a change in critical thinking scores at the end of the freshman year, but also less stereotyped and more emergent values.[2] If we can disregard socioeconomic characteristics of the samples studied and view all students as having the previously described potential, most research in this area has demonstrated that increases are greater during the first two years of college than during the last two.[3] While continued research is desired and necessary, the preceding studies do provide insight into a possible focal point for intervention regarding the development of critical thinking abilities and values change.

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1 P. L. Dressel and I. J. Lehmann, "The Impact of Higher Education on Student Values and Critical Thinking Abilities," Educational Record, 46, No. 3 (Summer, 1965), pp. 248-258.

2 I. J. Lehmann and S. J. Ikenberry, Critical Thinking, Attitudes, and Values in Higher Education: A Preliminary Report (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1959).

3 A. W. Chickering, Education and Identity (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., Publishers, 1969).

The above data can be interpreted as being supportive of the tenuous S.I.U. data regarding changes in the attrition rate of black students after the first two years. Moreover, the Experiment in Higher Education of Southern Illinois University at East St. Louis, Illinois, up through 1968, successfully demonstrated that critical intervention during the first two years, in a completely autonomous program, significantly aided student ability to cope with the academic and psychosocial demands of university life.[1]

According to Chickering, there are six major factors which can influence or retard student development. They are as follows:[2]

1. Clairty of objectives and internal consistency
2. Institutional size
3. Curriculum teaching and evaluation
4. Residence hall arrangements
5. Faculty and Administration
6. Friends, groups, and student culture

The Experiment in Higher Education reflects the personification of these factors in an actual educational setting, with high risk black students, and within the confines of a predominantly white university! Obviously, viable alternatives do, in fact, exist for

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1 Southern Illinois University Experiment in Higher Education, "Experiment in Higher Education Refunding Proposal," Edwardsville, Illinois, 1968. (Mimeographed.)

2 A. W. Chickering, Education and Identity (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., Publishers, 1969).

the development of an educational model which can work for culturally different students, regardless of socioeconomic status and without the end result of lowering academic standards.

SUMMARY

Current educational systems are not considered relevant for the future because they are oriented to an age and a society which no longer exists. Educational systems relevant for the future must be geared toward: (1) a consciousness which demonstrates concern for quality versus quantity; (2) a consciousness which places emphasis on human outcomes versus inputs (SAT scores, etc.); and (3) a consciousness which deemphasizes product outputs. Education for the future must strike a balance between the development of technical competencies, education for personal self-realization, and the development of tolerance for future-oriented change and alternative personal and social life styles. Educational outcomes for the future should be geared toward facilitation of individual capacity for decision-making in the presence of substantive options, as well as the enhancement of society's capabilities for continual, constructive change. The institutionalization of change is needed, and we must begin to develop change agents among black students, students who will have to demonstrate the competencies necessary

for penetrating the strategic decision-making centers of institutions which are vital to the American system, and therefore have implication for the well-being of black people.

For black educators to opt for the status quo is to deny that fundamental deficiencies currently exist in our educational systems. Thus, the options should be singularly clear - black educators must begin to put their jobs and social status on the line, perhaps even their "freedom," because an effort sufficient to correct current flaws can only be achieved by the complete transformation of existing social systems, including educational systems.

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